

**NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDELINES

**HOW TO SELECT, ADMINISTER, AND EVALUATE
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION
OF
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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**TEMPLATE DEVELOPED BY THE CCSSO STATE COLLABORATIVE ON ASSESSMENT AND
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INTRODUCTION

FIVE STEPS TO EFFECTIVE ACCOMMODATIONS

The Nebraska Department of Education Accommodations Guidelines: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Accommodations for Instruction of Students with Disabilities presents a five-step process for Individualized Educational Program (IEP) teams, teachers, and administrators to use in the selection, administration, and evaluation of the effectiveness of instructional and assessment accommodations by students with disabilities.

These five steps include the following:

- 1. Expect students with disabilities to achieve grade-level academic content standards.**
- 2. Learn about accommodations for instruction and assessment.**
- 3. Select accommodations for instruction based on the individual needs of each student.**
- 4. Use accommodations during instruction and assessment.**
- 5. Evaluate and improve accommodation usage and effectiveness.**

STEP 1

EXPECT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE GRADE-LEVEL ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS

Both the *No Child Left Behind 2001* (NCLB) and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* (IDEA 2004) require the participation of students with disabilities in grade-level, standards-based instruction, and state and district wide assessments.

In addition, *Nebraska Title 92, Rule 51* specifically governs services provided to students with disabilities. It is the role of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team to determine the specific accommodations needed by each student in order to access grade-level instruction on academic standards.

Nebraska Rule 51, 2008

007.07A The IEP shall include:

- 007.07A2 statement of measureable annual goal, including academic and functional goals, designed to:
 - 007.07A2a Meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; or for preschool children, as appropriate, to participate in appropriate activities...
- 007.07A5 A statement of the special education and related services... that will be provided to enable the child:
 - 007.07A5b To be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities;
- 008.01I A child with a disability must not be removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum.

IDEA 2004

Subpart 4 General Provisions, Sec. 682 Administrative provisions

(c) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

- (5) Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by—
 - (A) having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible to –
 - (i) meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children...

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Grade-level content standards are educational targets for all students, including students with disabilities. Teachers must ensure that students work toward those standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of each student.

Providing accommodations during instruction promotes equal access to grade-level content. To accomplish this goal of equal access...

- **every IEP team member must be familiar with the state content standards and know where to locate those standards, and**
- **collaboration between general and special educators must occur for successful student access.**

ACHIEVING GRADE LEVEL CONTENT STANDARDS

With the exception of students with severe cognitive disabilities who work on extended content standards aligned to the grade-level standards, all students with disabilities must work toward grade-level academic content standards.

Most students with disabilities will be able to achieve these standards when the following three conditions are met:

- 1. Instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.**

- 2. IEPs for students with disabilities are developed to ensure the provision of specialized instruction (e.g., specific reading skills, strategies for “learning how to learn”).**
- 3. Appropriate accommodations are provided to help students access grade-level content.**

Information on the Nebraska State Content Standards can be found at:

<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ci/index.htm>

STEP 2

LEARN ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of 1) presentation, 2) response, and 3) setting/timing/scheduling which provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities.

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations. Accommodation use should not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally need them at home, in the community, and, as they get older, in postsecondary education and/or the work place.

ACCOMMODATIONS CATEGORIES

Accommodations are commonly categorized in three ways: 1) presentation, 2) response, and 3) setting/timing/scheduling.

1. **Presentation Accommodations** allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile, and visual. Refer to page 14 for specific ideas and descriptions.

Who benefits most? Students who benefit most from presentation accommodations are those with print disabilities, defined as difficulty or inability to read standard print due to physical or cognitive disabilities.

2. **Response Accommodations** allow students to complete activities, assignments, and assessments in different ways. Refer to page 17 for specific ideas and descriptions.

Who benefits most? Students who benefit most from response accommodations are those with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including difficulties with communication, memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and organization).

3. **Setting/Timing/Scheduling Accommodations** change the location or the conditions of the instructional setting. The allowable length of time to complete an assignment

is increased and perhaps the way the time is organized is changed. Refer to page 19 for specific ideas and descriptions.

Who benefits most? Students who benefit most from setting accommodations are those easily distracted in large group settings and who concentrate best in a small group or individual setting. Students who benefit most from timing and scheduling accommodations are those who need more time to complete activities and assignments or students who focus better at certain times during the day.

Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations or alter the content of the material to be mastered. Accommodations provide access to receiving information and expressing what has been learned. If chosen appropriately, accommodations will neither provide too much or too little help to the student who receives it.

MODIFICATIONS

Modifications refer to practices that change or reduce learning expectations and academic content. Modifications generally increase the achievement gap between students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Examples of modifications include:

- requiring a student to learn less material or fewer grade-level standards and
- giving students out-of-grade level materials.

IEP teams should carefully evaluate the impact of providing modifications to students during instruction. Modifications to content may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunity to learn grade-level academic standards.

STEP 3

SELECT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

Effective decision-making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins with making good instructional decisions.

Making decisions about accommodations is one in which members of the IEP team attempt to “level the playing field” so students with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum. Accommodations are not meant to give an unfair advantage to a student with disabilities.

Good decision making is facilitated by gathering and reviewing valid data and information regarding the student’s disability, present level of academic achievement, and functional performance in relation to district content standards and benchmarks.

The IEP team must remember that each appropriate accommodation must be recorded in the student’s IEP.

IEP MEETINGS

There are potentially three times during the IEP development process when accommodations should be discussed.

1. “Consideration of Special Factors” (Rule 51 007.07B6 and 007.07B7)

The IEP team considers communication and assistive technology devices and supports.

2. “Supplementary Aids and Services” (Rule 51 007.07A5)

The IEP team considers possible “aids, services, and other supports” that are provided in general education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

3. “Participation in Assessments” (Rule 51 007.07A7, 007.07A7a, 007.07A7b)

The IEP team considers the student’s participation in the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) test and the accommodations used during the testing process. Generally, accommodations used during instruction and written into the student’s IEP are allowable for state-wide testing. However this is not always the case. The IEP team should refer to the “NeSA Approved Accommodations” document (page 29) for details and the process for adding additional accommodations to the approved list.

INVOLVING STUDENTS

It is critical for students with disabilities to understand their disabilities and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school and throughout life.

Teachers and other IEP Team members play a key role in working with students to advocate for themselves in selecting, using, and evaluating accommodations.

The more students are involved in the selection process, the more likely the accommodations will be used. This is especially important as students reach adolescence and the desire to be more independent increases.

Students need opportunities to learn which accommodations are most helpful for them. They need to learn how to ensure those accommodations are provided in all their classes and wherever they need them outside the school setting.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ACCOMMODATION SELECTION

Selecting accommodations for instruction is the role of a student's IEP Team.

The following overarching questions are provided as a guide when selecting appropriate accommodations for students receiving special education services:

- What are the student's learning strengths and areas for further improvement?
- How do the student's learning needs affect the achievement of grade-level content standards?
- What specialized instruction (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) does the student need to achieve grade-level content standards?
- What accommodations will increase the student's access to instruction by addressing the student's learning needs and reducing the effect of the student's disability? These may be new accommodations or accommodations the student is currently using.
- What accommodations are regularly used by the student during instruction?
- How does the use or elimination of accommodations affect the student's performance?
- What is the student's perception of how well an accommodation "worked?"
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodations worked?
- What difficulties did the student experience previously when using accommodations?

- Should the student continue to use an accommodation, are changes needed, or should the use of the accommodation be discontinued?
- Are there effective combinations of accommodations?

Additional support for determining appropriate accommodations can be found on page 21
TOOLS FOR THE IEP TEAM # 1 DETERMINING APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Of the accommodations that match the student's needs, consider:

- the student's willingness to learn and use the accommodations;
- the opportunities to learn how to use the accommodations in classroom settings;
- the conditions for use on the Nebraska NeSA tests and
- the various accommodations that may be appropriate in different content areas.

Plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accommodation. Be certain there is ample time to learn to use and practice the accommodations.

Finally, the IEP Team must always plan for ongoing evaluation of the student's accommodations and focus on improving accommodation effectiveness.

STEP 4

USE ACCOMMODATIONS DURING INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

ACCOMMODATIONS DURING INSTRUCTION

The number of students with disabilities in general education classes has grown significantly in recent years. Federal disability-related legislation has increased awareness of equal opportunities in education and the right to accommodations. The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) estimates that 80% of students with disabilities spend at least half of their school day in general education classrooms.

Responding to student learning preferences and developing multiple pathways to promote the achievement of grade level academic content standards are all examples of what is intended by the provision of accommodations—to give the student a fair and equitable chance to access and demonstrate learning.

IEPs for students with disabilities are developed to ensure that the provision of specialized instruction and appropriate accommodations are provided to help students access grade level content.

Students must be provided the selected accommodations during instructional periods that necessitate the use of those accommodations. Teachers and staff who are familiar with accommodation strategies are better prepared to make arrangements that will ensure students with disabilities have equal opportunities to achieve academically.

ACCOMMODATIONS DURING ASSESSMENT

IDEA 2004 and Nebraska Rule 51 700.07A7 stipulate that the “individualized education program” or “IEP” includes: “A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state and district-wide assessments;”

The logistics of providing the accommodations during state-wide assessments must be mapped out. It is not uncommon for members of the IEP team, frequently special education teachers, to

be given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accommodations for all students who may need them.

Thus, it is essential for all IEP team members to become familiar with the *Nebraska State Accountability Approved Accommodations* (refer to page 29) and the procedure for gaining approval for accommodations not listed in the Approved Accommodations list.

STEP 5

EVALUATE AND IMPROVE ACCOMMODATIONS USE

Accommodations must be selected on the basis of the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for instruction.

EVALUATING ACCOMMODATIONS

Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations are necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in instruction.

Data on the use and impact of accommodations may:

- reveal questionable patterns of accommodations use;
- support the continued use of some accommodations;
- initiate the rethinking of other accommodations and
- indicate the need for additional training and support to teachers and paraeducators.

TYPES OF DATA COLLECTION

The collection of data that could be used to guide an evaluation of effective accommodations might include:

- observations conducted during instruction in various content areas;
- interviews with teachers and students;
- improving Learning for Children with Disabilities (ILCD) data and self-assessments and
- formative and summative test results.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE EVALUATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS

1. What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results on classroom assignments when accommodations are used versus when accommodations are not used?
3. If a student does not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodations, or using accommodations that are ineffective?
4. What are the student's and teachers' perceptions of how well the accommodation worked?

5. What difficulties are encountered in the use of accommodations?
6. What combination of accommodations seems to be effective?

These questions can be used to summatively evaluate the accommodations used at the student level, as well as, the school or district levels.

PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT ARE PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS?

Presentation accommodations are those services and supports used during instruction to help students gain full access to academic content and instruction. Accommodations many times reflect adaptations in classroom teaching practices and organization to help students with disabilities succeed. It is important to remember that when using accommodations, the expectation that students will learn grade-level content standards remains unchanged.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS?

A student with a learning disability affecting one or more of these areas may benefit from presentation accommodations:

- auditory and/or visual perception and processing,
- abstract reasoning,
- long or short term memory,
- mathematical calculation, and
- executive functioning (planning and time management).

Multi-Sensory Presentation Accommodations	
Large Print	Large print editions of instructional materials are required for some students with visual impairments. It is recommended that regular print materials be manipulated to reformat and enlarge or change the font as needed. All text and graphic materials—including labels and captions on pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, exponential numbers, notes, and footnotes—must be presented in at least 18-point type or larger based on the needs of each individual student. It is important for the print to be clear, with high contrast between the color of the print and the color of the background. When using large-print classroom material, consider the weight, size, and awkwardness of books. Large-print books are now available that look very similar to the same books in standard print
Magnification Devices	Regular print materials may be enlarged by using magnification devices. These include eyeglass-mounted magnifiers, free standing or handheld magnifiers, enlarged computer monitors, or computers with screen enlargement programs. Some students also use Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) to enlarge print and display printed material with various image enhancements on a screen.
Sign Language	Sign language interpreters may be required for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Some students may need all print materials interpreted while learning to read print. Interpreters need to be able to translate in the same method of sign language typically used by the student (e.g., American Sign Language, Signed Exact English, Cued Speech). Interpreters must be qualified as described in Rule 51.

Braille	Braille is a method of reading a raised-dot code with the fingertips. Not all students who are blind read Braille fluently or use Braille as their primary mode of reading. Even if they use it as their primary mode of reading, Braille users should also build skills in using audiotape, compact discs, and speech synthesis. NIMAS requirements ensure that textbook publishers make specialized formats (Braille, large print, audio, and digital) available.
Audiotape, Compact Disk or other recording devices.	Instructional materials can be prerecorded on an audio cassette or compact disk (CD), or other recording devices that a student accesses by listening. Classroom directions, assignments, and lectures could also be recorded.
Tactile Graphics	Tactile graphic images provide graphic information through touch instead of sight. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform). Tactile sensitivity (recognizing graphic images through touch) is less discriminating than visual reading, making many diagrams too complicated to understand without significant additional information. Additional information can be created through word descriptions.
Human Reader	A qualified person may be provided to read orally to students who are unable to decode text visually. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Graphic materials may be described but should also be made available in print or tactile formats. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text.
Books on Tape or CDs	Books on Tape/CD, a service provided by Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic, is available to students and schools. Using a toll-free number, people may borrow textbooks for a specified period of time. A special tape player may also be needed.
Recorded Books	Recorded Books are produced on tape, CD, or may be downloaded to an MP3 player. This material may be borrowed from libraries or purchased from bookstores. Many online bookstores also carry recorded books, making access even easier. Some of the tapes contain the full book and some are abridged (e.g., Reader's Digest version). These tapes play on standard cassette or CD players. Tapes or CDs for children often include a book for following along. Students who can see print may want to obtain a print copy of a taped book to follow along.
Audio Amplification Devices	Some students may use audio amplification devices in addition to hearing aids to increase clarity. Individual and classroom FM systems are available.
DVDs	Many books have been made into movies, giving students a visual and auditory way to access literature.
Descriptive Video	Descriptive video is a descriptive narration of key visual elements, making television programs, feature films, home videos, and other visual media accessible to people who are visually impaired. Key visual elements include actions, gestures, facial expressions, and scene changes. Inserted within the natural pauses in dialogue, audio descriptions of important visual details help to engage viewers with the story.
Screen Reader	A screen reader is a computer application that converts text to synthesized speech or to Braille (read with an auxiliary Braille display). Computer literacy is essential for screen reader use. Screen reading software allows students to listen to text as it is displayed on a computer screen. Students can choose to listen to any text multiple times. Some products work by having a student lay a page on a scanner. When a student activates the machine, it reads the text aloud using an optical character recognition (OCR) system. Mathematic formulas are normally

	displayed on screen as graphics that cannot be read by a screen reader.
Talking Materials	Many classroom materials are now available with auditory components. These include calculators, “talking” clocks, thermometers, timers, and voltmeters.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES THAT MAY BE HELPFUL

For additional instructional strategies to support the presentation of information and content standards to students with disabilities and struggling students, please refer to the *Tools for the IEP Team #4 “Differentiated Instructional Strategies”* on page 25.

RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT ARE RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Response accommodations allow the student to communicate and demonstrate their knowledge using alternative forms (oral response, sign language, scribes, etc.) or other assistive technology.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Response accommodations can benefit students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities. Students with disabilities may require response accommodations to help with memory problems, the sequencing of events, and the organization of thoughts.

RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS	
Scribe	A scribe is someone who writes down what a student dictates using an assistive communication device, pointing, sign language, or speech. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way and must record word for word exactly what the student has dictated. Scribes should request clarification from the student about the use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling key words, and must allow the student to review and edit what the scribe has written.
Word Processor or Computer	A student types on a word processor or computer keyboard. This option may increase a student's independence and reduce the need for a scribe. Research has found that students who are very familiar with computers and have good keyboarding skills complete better work on computers than by handwriting. Assistive technology that can be used for typing includes customized keyboards, mouth/ headstick/pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, and trackball.
Speech to Text	Voice recognition may be used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work). Continuous speech voice recognition allows students to dictate text fluently into the computer. These new applications can recognize speech at up to 160 words per minute. While these systems do give students system control, they are not yet hands-free.
Brailler	A Brailler is a Braille keyboard used for typing Braille that can then be printed in standard print or Braille (embosser). Students must be proficient in the use of Braille to successfully use the Brailler which is similar to a typewriter or computer keyboard. Paper is inserted into the Brailler and multiple keys are pressed at once, creating Braille dots with each press. Through an alternative computer port, newer Brailleurs can simultaneously act as a speech synthesizer that reads the text displayed on the screen when paired with a screen reading program.
Note Takers	Students may have another student take notes that can be photocopied for both students to use. Portable note-taking devices are small, lightweight devices equipped with a Braille or typewriter-style keyboard for input and synthetic voice. Some note takers also contain a Braille display (between 18 and 40 characters) for output. Note takers are excellent tools for recording notes in school, at home, or at work. They often have additional features such as a calculator and a calendar function. Newer models have a built-in modem, which allows the user to access e-mail as well as surf the Web. When

	these models are connected to a PC, files can be exchanged or information can be sent from the note taker to a Braille embosser or to an ink printer. When linked to a computer using a screen reader, note takers equipped with a Braille display can act as a Braille output device.
Tape Recorder	A student uses a tape recorder to verbally record class work rather than writing on paper.
Speech to Text	Voice recognition may be used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work). Continuous speech voice recognition allows students to dictate text fluently into the computer. These new applications can recognize speech at up to 160 words per minute. While these systems do give students system control, they are not yet hands-free.
Word Lists, math and science formulas, etc.	Word banks, scientific words, vocabulary words, math and science formulas will support comprehension, computations and laboratory experiences for students with memory problems and/or organizational skills.

ACCOMMODATIONS USED TO SOLVE OR ORGANIZE RESPONSES	
Calculation Devices	If a student's disability affects mathematics calculation but not reasoning, a calculator or other assistive device (e.g., abacus, arithmetic table, manipulatives, or number chart) may be used. It is important to determine whether the use of a calculation device is a matter of convenience or a necessary accommodation. Calculators may be adapted with large keys or voice output (talking calculators). In some cases, an abacus may be useful for students when mathematics problems are to be calculated without a calculator. The abacus can function as paper and pencil for students with visual impairments.
Spelling and Grammar Devices	Pocket spell checkers may be useful to some students. Students enter an approximate spelling and then see or hear the correct spelling or correct use of a word. Computer spell-check, grammar check, or dictionaries are also helpful.
Visual Organizers	Visual organizers include graph paper, highlighters, place markers, scratch paper, and templates. If students are not allowed to write in books owned by the school, photocopying parts of written text allows a student to use a highlighter and write in the margins.
Graphic Organizers	Graphic organizers help students arrange information into patterns in order to organize their work and stay focused on the content. Graphic organizers are especially helpful for writing reports and essays. Semantic mapping software is now available to enable students to understand a narrative story or writing elements through graphics.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES THAT MAY BE HELPFUL:

For additional instructional strategies to support response accommodations for students with disabilities and struggling students, please refer to the section *Tools for the IEP Team #4 "Differentiated Instructional Strategies"* on page 17.

SETTING, TIMING, & SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT ARE SETTING, TIMING & SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS?

Setting accommodations change the location in which a student receives instruction or participates in an assessment, or the conditions of an instructional setting. Students may be allowed to sit in a different location than the majority of students in order to reduce distractions to themselves and others or to increase physical access or access to special equipment. Timing and scheduling accommodations change the allowable length of time to complete assignments, assessments, and activities. There may also be a change in the way time is organized. Timing accommodations give students the additional time and the breaks they need to complete activities, assignments, and assessments. Other changes might include the particular time of day, day of the week, or number of days over which a particular activity, assignment, or assessment takes place.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM SETTING, TIMING & SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS?

Setting accommodations can benefit students who are easily distracted in large group settings and who concentrate best in a small group or individual setting. Changes in location also benefit students who receive accommodations (e.g. reader, scribe, frequent breaks) that might distract other students. Students with physical disabilities might need a more accessible location, specific room conditions, or special equipment.

SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS	
Reduce Distractions to student	To reduce distractions, allow a student to do individual work in a different location. Changes may also be made to a student's location within a room. For example, a student who is easily distracted may not want to sit near windows, doors, or pencil sharpeners. Sitting near the teacher's desk or in the front of a classroom may be helpful for some students. Study carrels might also be helpful for students who are easily distracted. Students with low vision may prefer to sit in the part of a room that has the best light. Some students concentrate best while wearing noise buffers such as earphones, earplugs, or headphones.
Reduce Distractions to Others	Some students use accommodations that may distract other students. In addition, some students might perform better when they can read and think out loud or make noises that may distract other students. Distractions to other students are reduced by using these accommodations in individual settings.

Change Locations	Occasionally a setting might be changed to increase physical access for a student. Other students may need equipment that requires specific locations for learning. Students should be able to access any room or space on the school grounds used by students in general.
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Timing and scheduling accommodations are most helpful for students who need more time than generally allowed to complete activities, assignments, and assessments. Extra time may be needed to process written text (e.g., a student with a learning disability who processes information slowly), to write (e.g., a student with limited dexterity as a result of arthritis), or to use other accommodations or equipment (e.g., assistive technology, audiotape, scribe).

Students who cannot concentrate continuously for an extended period can become frustrated or stressed. They may need frequent or extended breaks. Some students with disabilities may have functioning levels that vary during the day because of the effects of medications or diminishing energy levels.

TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS	
Extended Time	Extended time may require a student's IEP team to determine a fairly specific amount of extra time to complete assignments. A standard extension may be time and one half, or double time allotted to disabled persons. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis.
Multiple or Frequent Breaks	Extended time may require a student's IEP team to determine a fairly specific amount of extra time to complete assignments. A standard extension may be time and one half, or double time allotted to disabled persons. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis. Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals, after completion of assignments, or after activities. Sometimes a student is allowed to take breaks when individually needed. Sometimes assignments are divided into shorter sections so students can take a break between. If the length of a break is predetermined, a timer might be used to signal the end of the break.
Change Schedule or Order of Activities	If possible, activities that require focused attention should be scheduled at the time of day when a student is most likely to demonstrate peak performance. Students may be allowed to complete activities over multiple days—completing a portion each day. This is usually done to reduce fatigue.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES THAT MAY BE HELPFUL

For additional instructional strategies to support setting, timing and scheduling, please refer to the section *Tools for the IEP Team #4 “Differentiated Instructional Strategies”* on page 19.

TOOLS FOR THE IEP TEAM # 1

DETERMINING APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS

Directions: Use these questions to identify various types of presentation, response, setting, timing, and scheduling accommodations for students with disabilities. Though not exhaustive, its purpose is to prompt IEP Teams to consider a wide range of accommodation needs. Use the list in planning the IEP by indicating Y (Yes), N (No), or DK/NA (Don't Know or Not Applicable).

Student Name: _____

	Y	N	DK/ NA
PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS			
1. Does the student have a visual impairment that requires large-type or Braille materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is the student able to read and understand directions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Can the student follow oral directions from an adult or audiotape?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Does the student need directions repeated frequently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are assistive technology devices indicated on the student's IEP?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Has the student been identified as having a reading disability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Does the student have low or poor reading skills that may require the reading of tests or sections of tests that do not measure reading comprehension in order to demonstrate knowledge of subject areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the student have a hearing impairment that requires an interpreter to sign directions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Does the student have a hearing impairment and need a listening device?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS			
10. Does the student have difficulty tracking from one page to another and maintaining that student's place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Does the student have a disability that affects the ability to record that student's responses in the standard manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Can the student use a pencil or writing instrument?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Does the student use a word processor to complete homework assignments or tests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Does the student respond orally or use a recording device to complete assignments or tests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Does the student need the services of a scribe?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Does the student have a disability that affects that student's ability to spell?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Does the student have a visual or motor disability that affects that student's ability to perform math computations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS	Y	N	DK/ NA
18. Do others easily distract the student?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Does the student require any specialized equipment or other accommodations that may be distracting to others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Does the student have visual impairments that require special lighting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Does the student have auditory impairments that require special acoustics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Does the student exhibit behaviors that may disrupt the attention of other students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS	Y	N	DK/ NA
23. Can the student work continuously for the length of time allocated for typical assignments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Does the student use other accommodations or adaptive equipment that require more time to complete work (e.g., Braille, scribe, use of head pointer to type)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Does the student tire easily due to health impairments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Does the student have a visual impairment that causes eyestrain and requires frequent breaks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Does the student have a learning disability that affects the rate at which that student processes written information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Does the student have a disability that affects the rate at which that student writes responses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TOOLS FOR THE IEP TEAM # 2

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS LOG

One way to keep track of the accommodations that work or don't work for a student is to support the student in keeping an "accommodations log." The log enables the student be "in charge" and become a self-advocate for their own accommodations.

Depending on the student's age and ability, the log can be kept up-to-date through a variety of methods. A simple system of smiling or frowning faces could be recorded by the student each day. Regular, brief discussions with the special education teacher or other staff member could be recorded on a simple calendar. Quick, student interviews by a peer after the use of accommodations in class could be noted in a notebook. The log might include questions or statements such as these:

1. What accommodation was used in the class, assignment and/or test?
2. How well did the accommodation work?
3. If the accommodation was not used, how well did the assignment/test go?
4. Did you have any problems or trouble using the accommodation(s)?
5. How well does your teacher think the accommodation worked?

Accommodation decisions and evaluations made by the IEP Team will be much more reliable and valid if the student comes to the IEP meeting with a log documenting all of these ideas.

CREATING AN ACCOMMODATIONS LOG

Consider the following questions when designing an accommodations log for students:

1. What could be included as headings in the log?
2. When would the entries be made in the log? by whom?
3. What types of supports would the student need to make these entries?
4. What additional formats could be used beside a written format?
5. With whom should the student share log entries and how frequently should this be done?
6. How could the log be used in the development of the student's IEP?

TOOLS FOR THE IEP TEAM # 3

DO'S AND DON'TS IN SELECTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Do...

- Make accommodation decisions based on individualized needs or needs in each academic content area.
- Select accommodations that reduce the effect of the disability on accessing instruction and demonstrating learning.
- Be certain to document instructional and assessment accommodations on the IEP and routinely provide opportunities to use those accommodations in classroom instruction.
- Be familiar with the NeSA Approved Accommodations and the Nebraska Department of Education's procedures for considering additional accommodations.
- If the student is participating in the NeSA on-line assessment, be familiar with the built-in accommodations included in that procedure. Provide opportunities for students to practice those accommodations throughout the year.
- Be specific about the "Where, When, Who, and How" of providing accommodations.
- Evaluate accommodations used by the student and include the student in that evaluation whenever possible.
- Get input about accommodations from teachers, parents, and students. Use that information when making decision at IEP team meetings.

Don't...

- Make accommodations decisions based on whatever is easiest to do.
- Select accommodations unrelated to documented student learning needs or that are intended to give students an unfair advantage.
- Use accommodations that have not been documented on the IEP.
- Assume all instructional accommodations are appropriate for use on NeSA state-wide assessments.
- Simply indicate accommodations will be provided "as appropriate" or "as necessary."
- Assume the same accommodations remain appropriate year after year.
- Assume certain accommodations, such as extra time, are appropriate for every student in every content area.
- Check every accommodation possible on a checklist simply to be "safe."
- Make decisions about instructional accommodations without input from the student, the parents, and the teacher(s).
- Provide NeSA on-line assessment accommodations for the first time on the testing day.

TOOLS FOR THE IEP TEAM # 4

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

THE MORE WAYS WE TEACH, THE MORE STUDENTS WE REACH

Differentiated instruction represents a variety of strategies designed to provide for the instructional needs of a wide range of students in diverse classrooms. In fact, many instructional strategies are aimed at creating a more flexible teaching style that is responsive to a wide array of student needs and readiness levels.

As a result, teachers who adopt a differentiated instructional approach to teaching will likely experience fewer problems with providing accommodations to students since they already “get it”—that is, the “big picture” of what are considered best practices and effective learning and instructional techniques.

Classroom Seating Tips and Personal Work Space

1. Seat high-maintenance students near the front of the classroom (preferential seating), close to the classroom teacher (proximity), and away from doors, corridors, and/or windows to minimize auditory and visual distractions.
2. Increase the distance between desks to reduce the temptation for some students to distract their neighbors. Pre-assign seating when needed.
3. Seat students based on their hearing or vision needs.
4. Change teaching locations within the classroom throughout the day.
5. Permit overactive students to stand when they are working at their desks. Provide ample opportunity for movement.

Fine Motor Problems

6. Encourage student to use a three-sided pencil or a pencil grip for handwriting.
7. Encourage the use of erasable-ink pens for students who tend to “camp out” at the pencil sharpener.
8. Minimize or eliminate board/chart copying and textbook transferring.

Creative Use of Learning Time

9. Adjust the prime learning time to maximize each student’s peak learning time.
10. Extend learning time to complete tasks.
11. Pre-teach difficult and/or new concepts for those students who need to be eased into learning new or different things.

12. Provide students with adequate wait time as a way to increase the quality and depth of responses.
13. Provide the students with a timer to track available time to complete tasks. Use sand timers, personal stopwatch, or other timing devices.

Classroom Environment

14. Provide visual support to help students create mental pictures:
Photos Pictures Dioramas Posters Models Overhead
Graphs Charts Drawings Symbols Timelines Maps
15. Display informational posters on the ceiling or in high locations around the room. Poster topics might include: editing guidelines, capitalization rules, problem solving steps, classroom rules, or proof-reading procedures.
16. Post rules, daily schedules, and sequence of steps for the performing tasks.
17. Use natural and/or full spectrum lighting in the classroom.
18. Reduce auditory and visual classroom distractions (e.g., humming light ballast, vibrating aquarium air pump, air conditioner noise, flickering fluorescent lights, bells, classroom intercom, computers, etc.)

General Ideas and Strategies

19. Provide left-handed scissors or Fiskars™ for students who are cross-dominant and/or left-handed. Also provide left-handed rulers, notebooks, pens, and pencils.
20. Assign an appropriate amount of homework.
21. Provide instruction in multi-sensory ways (e.g., auditory, kinesthetic, visual).
22. Provide students with a sample of what high-quality completed work looks like. If possible, laminate to make permanent. Post samples around the room.
23. Use gestures, actions, facial expressions, etc., to reinforce your words.
24. Have more “white space” on a page. Do not crowd material or worksheets.
25. “Chunk” assignments and work into smaller segments.

Giving Directions

26. Encourage students to verbally repeat or paraphrase directions, explanations, and instructions.
27. Teach at eye level to engage learners. Know the meaning of where eyes are cast. Be sure the student is paying attention when you are giving directions. Establish eye contact. Caution: In some cultures, sustained eye contact is considered confrontational of disrespectful.
28. Allow students to record directions, explanations, or instructions to replay as often as needed.
29. Break long assignments into shorter ones. Give portions of assignments one at a time.

30. Make directions clear and exact. Slow the pace of oral directions. Keep directions to two or three steps. Use precision speaking with a rhythm.

Math Strategies

31. Encourage students to use manipulatives during math. Provide students with an assortment of manipulatives.
32. Group students by skills attainment/need for skill instruction. Be sure to use flexible grouping practices.
33. Cross out every other math example as a way to reduce the volume of work for some students.
34. Always assess math learning in a way that separates it from a student's language ability.
35. Mark correct answers only. Use a yellow magic marker to celebrate accomplishments.
36. Color-code operational words. (e.g. add, subtract, multiply, and divide)
37. Cut math worksheets into horizontal strips to avoid overwhelming students.
38. Turn lined paper vertically as a way to facilitate number placement or use graph paper.
39. Provide students with a recorded multiplication facts set to songs/raps.

Reading/Writing Ideas

40. Use high-interest, low-vocabulary reading material.
41. Use transparent plastic colored focus strips for highlighting sentences when reading. A plastic report cover cut in strips is ideal.
42. Have students create their own personal modified dictionary.
43. Accept shortened or adjusted writing assignments from some students.
44. Accept oral recordings as an alternative to writing assignments.
45. Encourage some students to use a tag board place keeper with a transparent plastic colored focus strip for highlighting sentences when reading.

Formative Classroom Assessments

46. Use a variety of formative assessments to document a student's learning process and progress.
47. Allow a student to use alternative methods of demonstrating that he/she understood what was taught (e.g. model, diorama, demonstration, drama, oral recording, etc.)

Focus/Attention Ideas

48. Help students make and use a focus frame, or sliding mask to narrow information and help them better attend to their work.
49. Provide students with some type of feedback at least every 30 minutes or less.
50. Provide students with a desk carrel to reduce distractions and provide privacy. Carrels are ideal for creating portable learning centers.
51. Give visual cues to increase time-on task behavior.
52. Remember to enlarge text when using the projection equipment. Eliminate distracting artwork and designs on student worksheets/text.
53. Encourage students to use procedural self-talk to talk themselves through tasks.

Classroom Climate Ideas

54. Play background music to calm and quiet students.
55. Use music to calmly transition from one subject area/activity to another.
56. Use chimes, a soft bell, a clicker, a kazoo, etc. to summon students' attention.
57. Daily meet and greet students upon their arrival in the classroom as well as at their departure.
58. Communicate in a supportive, non-threatening manner.

Strategies adapted from *Differentiated Intervention Strategies that Support Struggling Students in the Regular Classroom* document by Jim Grant (jgrant@sde.com)

TOOLS FOR THE IEP TEAM # 5

NEBRASKA STATE ACCOUNTABILITY (NeSA) APPROVED ACCOMMODATIONS

The purpose of the NeSA Approved Accommodations document is to provide a quick reference for school districts about the following:

TEST ACCOMMODATIONS

For students with IEPs or 504 plans, these accommodations, adjustments or adaptations in the test or the testing process do not change the test expectation, the grade level, or the construct or content being measured. Accommodations should only be used if appropriate for the student and employed during instruction throughout the year.

TEST MODIFICATIONS

Modifications include adjustments or changes in the test or the testing process that change the test expectation, the grade level, or the construct or content being measured. **Modifications are not appropriate for state testing.**

ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION APPROVAL PROCESS

If an instructional team identifies an accommodation they believe should be added to the NeSA Approved Accommodations list, districts are encouraged to contact the Statewide Assessment Office (402-471-2495) or the Special Education Office (402-471-2471) and submit their request. This must be done prior to January 1 of the year the accommodation is used on the NeSA test. An NDE panel will review the accommodation for testing validity and appropriateness.

The “Nebraska State Accountability Approved Accommodations” document can be found at:

<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/assessment/AssessmentAtoZ.htm>

For additional information, please contact:

**The Nebraska Department of Education
Office of Special Education
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987**

(402) 471-2471

**To download additional copies please visit:
<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/sped/index.html>**

Our appreciation to:

The Iowa Department of Education and the South Dakota Department of Education
for permission to use excerpts from their accommodation manuals.